

Chapter III Population and Economics

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Chapter is to delineate the elements that make up the economic life of the Town of Sutton and to consider how various elements should be managed to best achieve the type of community our citizens desire. The Master Plan Community Survey indicated that the citizens wish to retain the rural atmosphere and “high quality of life” of the Town and that growth of the Town be managed to encourage desirable industrial and commercial activities in properly zoned areas.

The need to maintain flourishing workplaces is of great importance to many communities throughout New Hampshire. A sustainable community includes a variety of businesses, industries, and institutions, which are environmentally sound and financially viable. Businesses need to provide reasonable wages and benefits to workers and provide those workers with opportunities to develop their skills through training, education, and other forms of assistance to prepare for the community’s future needs. Government, business, and public service organizations are all important in attracting new investment and in developing new businesses that suit the character of the community.

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

Historical Population Trends

Changes in the population of any community are influenced by a variety of factors, ranging from changes in the local economic base to national events, such as wars and recessions. From 1790 to 2000, Sutton had seen a growth in population of 1,024 people, or approximately 5 people per year. However, as can be seen from the following chart, this is not a consistent rate and is subject to fluctuation.

Sutton Historical Population, 1790-2000

Year	Population	% Change from Previous Decade
1790	520	--
1800	878	68.8%
1810	1,328	51.3%
1820	1,573	18.4%
1830	1,424	-9.5%
1840	1,362	-4.4%
1850	1,387	1.8%
1860	1,431	3.2%
1870	1,155	-19.3%
1880	993	-14.0%
1890	849	-14.5%
1900	776	-8.6%
1910	698	-10.1%
1920	632	-9.5%
1930	512	-19.0%
1940	675	31.8%
1950	554	-17.9%
1960	498	-10.1%
1970	642	28.9%
1980	1,091	69.9%
1990	1,457	33.5%
2000	1,544	6.0%

Source: US Census, NH Office of Energy and Planning

Sutton's historical population has fluctuated greatly over the last 210 years. The largest population expansion occurred between 1970 and 1980 during which the Town experienced nearly 70% growth. Prior to that growth, the Town had seen similar growth in 1800 – that growth last for twenty years (1820) and was followed by decades of negligible or negative growth.

Regional Population Trends

During the period of 1980 through 2002, Sutton experienced a population increase of 49.3%, as can be seen below. Since 1980, the population has increased by 538 people, with the largest increase occurring between 1980 and 1990 (366 people or 36.6 persons per year).

Sutton and Abutting Communities Population Trends 1970-2002

Town	1980 Population	1990 Population	% Growth 1980- 1990	2000 Population	% Growth 1990- 2000	2002 Population Est.	% Growth 1980-2002
Sutton	1,091	1,457	33.5%	1,544	6.0%	1,629	49.3%
Bradford	1,115	1,405	26.0%	1,454	3.5%	1,514	35.8%
New	2,935	3,180	8.3%	4,116	29.4%	4,286	46.0%

London							
Newbury	961	1,347	40.2%	1,702	26.4%	1,790	86.3%
Warner	1,963	2,250	14.6%	2,760	22.7%	2,883	46.9%
Wilmot	725	935	29.0%	1,144	22.4%	1,190	64.1%
Merrimack Co.	98,302	120,005	22.1%	136,225	13.5%	140,947	43.4%
State of NH	920,610	1,109,117	20.5%	1,235,550	11.4%	1,275,000	38.5%

Source: 1980 Census, 1990 Census, 2000 Census, NH Office of Energy and Planning

Population Projections

Based on observed past population estimates, it is difficult to develop population projections for future years. As noted in the Community Facilities Chapter of this Plan, predicting future population growth is crucial for planning the expansion of community services and facilities.

Prediction of future population changes can only serve as an estimate of what may happen in the future. As noted previously, population trends are affected by numerous variables, including economic shifts and other similar events. The local population projections are based on a community's historical share of its' county's growth. These numbers can only serve as an estimate of what may occur over the next twenty years, with regards to population changes.

Sutton and Abutting Communities Population Projections, 2000-2025

Town	2000 Actual	2005 Projected	2010 Projected	2015 Projected	2020 Projected	2025 Projected	2000- 2025 % Increase
Sutton	1,544	1,680	1,810	1,940	2,070	2,200	31.0
Bradford	1,454	1,650	1,790	1,900	1,990	2,070	25.5
New London	4,116	4,410	4,690	4,960	5,240	5,520	25.2
Newbury	1,702	1,820	1,950	2,090	2,230	2,370	30.2
Warner	2,760	2,960	3,210	3,450	3,700	3,960	33.8
Wilmot	1,144	1,220	1,300	1,380	1,470	1,560	27.9
Merrimack County	136,225	145,510	155,280	164,580	173,780	182,880	25.7
State of NH	1,235,550	1,311,050	1,385,210	1,456,120	1,523,680	1,586,070	21.0

Source: October 1999 Population Projections, NH Office of Energy and Planning, 2000 Census

As can be seen above, Sutton's population is projected to increase 31% from 2005 - 2025. This corresponds to a 1.5% **annual** population increase and a 15% per decade population increase. These population projections should be looked at as a rough estimate of future population growth in the region.

Population Densities

One common measure of community character and sense of place is population density (persons per square mile). These density figures are based on the total land area, not discounting for

unbuildable land, roads, and permanently protected areas. As noted below, Sutton had 36 persons per square mile in 2000, which is the lowest density, as compared to abutting communities.

Population per Square Mile for Sutton and Abutting Communities, 1970 - 2000

Town	Land Area (Sq. Miles) *	Persons per Square Mile 1970	Persons per Square Mile 1980	Persons per Square Mile 1990	Persons per Square Mile 2000
Sutton	43.3	15	25	34	36
Bradford	35.9	19	31	39	41
New London	22.4	100	131	142	184
Newbury	35.8	14	27	38	48
Warner	55.5	26	35	41	50
Wilmot	29.4	18	25	32	39
Merrimack Co.	934.0	87	106	129	146
State of NH	8968.0	83	103	124	138

* Land area includes all buildable and unbuildable land

Source: 1970 Census, 1980 Census, 1990 Census, 2000 Census

Age Characteristics

Knowing not only the number of people living in Sutton but also the characteristics of the residents, is key to adequately planning for Sutton's future needs.

Households with Children and Older Adults

By knowing the number of households with children, under the age of 18, and adults, over the age of 65, the community can better plan for the needs and wants of the residents. As represented in the table below, Sutton has fewer households with children as compared to abutting communities with the exception of New London. In general, Sutton is on the low side of average for both the state and county.

Households with Children, 2000

Town	Households with People Under 18 Years Old		Households with No People Under 18 Years Old	
Sutton	198	31.9%	423	68.1%
Bradford	204	36.5%	355	63.5%
New London	317	20.1%	1,257	79.9%
Newbury	222	32.1%	469	69.8%
Warner	366	34.9%	682	65.1%
Wilmot	163	35.5%	296	64.5%
Merrimack Co.	18,677	36.0%	33,166	64.0%
New Hampshire	167,367	35.3%	304,459	64.7%

Source: 2000 Census

Households with Older Adults, 2000

Town	Households with People 65 Years Old or Older		Households with No People 65 Years Old or Older	
Sutton	143	23.0%	478	77.0%
Bradford	117	20.9%	442	79.1%
New London	730	46.4%	844	53.6%
Newbury	175	25.3%	516	74.7%
Warner	196	18.7%	852	81.3%
Wilmot	94	20.5%	365	79.5%
Merrimack Co.	10,242	19.8%	41,601	80.2%
New Hampshire	168,371	35.5%	303,455	64.5%

Source: 2000 Census

As can be seen in the two tables above, Sutton has 31.9% of households with people under the age of 18 and 23.0% of households with people 65 years old or older.

Population by Age Group

Understanding population trends by age group can help communities allocate resources for public infrastructure and services to meet the needs of the population. As can be seen below, the age group in Sutton with the largest percentage of people in it is 35-44 years of age.

Sutton Population by Age Group, 2000

Age Group	Population	Group as % of Population
Under 5	66	4.3%
5 to 9 Years	96	6.2%
10 to 14 Years	106	6.9%
15 to 17 Years	74	4.8%
18 and 19 Years	29	1.9%
20 to 24 Years	25	1.6%
25 to 34 Years	123	8.0%
35 to 44 Years	386	25.0%
45 to 54 Years	279	18.1%
55 to 59 Years	112	7.3%
60 to 64 Years	78	5.1%
65 to 74 Years	154	10.0%
Over 75	90	5.8%
Total	1,544	100.0%

Source: 2000 US Census

EDUCATION LEVELS OF RESIDENTS

Of the total population living in Sutton in 2000 (25 years old and older), 90.8% of Sutton residents had a high school degree or higher and 33.3% had an bachelors degree or higher. These figures are just slightly lower than the *average* educational attainment of the abutting communities. For more detail regarding the educational levels of Sutton and abutting communities, please refer to the table below.

Educational Levels of Persons 25 Years and Older, 2000

	Sutton	Bradford	New London	Newbury	Warner	Wilmot	State
Less than HS Diploma	102 (9.2%)	74 (7.4%)	106 (3.8%)	82 (6.7%)	259 (13.8%)	52 (6.5%)	103,754 (12.6%)
HS Diploma	283 (25.4%)	286 (29.2%)	313 (11.3%)	288 (23.4%)	512 (27.5%)	185 (23.2%)	247,723 (30.1%)
Some College	255 (22.9%)	216 (22.1%)	512 (18.5%)	250 (20.4%)	351 (18.8%)	153 (19.3%)	164,634 (20.0%)
Associates Degree	102 (9.2%)	86 (8.8%)	185 (6.7%)	103 (8.4%)	158 (8.5%)	67 (8.4%)	71,772 (8.7%)
Bachelors Degree	225 (20.2%)	209 (21.4%)	1,080 (39.0%)	350 (28.5%)	364 (19.5%)	194 (24.4%)	153,873 (18.7%)
Graduate / Professional Degree	146 (13.1%)	107 (10.9%)	574 (20.7%)	155 (12.6%)	221 (11.8%)	145 (18.2%)	82,230 (10.0%)
% of Pop. with HS Degree or Higher	90.8%	92.4%	96.2%	93.3%	86.1%	93.5%	87.4%
% of Pop. with Bachelor's Degree or Higher	33.3%	32.3%	59.7%	41.1%	31.4%	42.6%	28.7%

Source: 2000 Census

EMPLOYMENT AND COMMUTING CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS

Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment

The labor force of a community is defined as the number of people who are over the age of 16, regardless of their employment status. Employment is defined as the number of employed persons in the labor force. In 1990, the population of Sutton was 1,457 people, with a labor force of 817 people, constituting 56.1% of the population. In 2000, the population of Sutton was 1,544 people, with a labor force of 825 people, which is approximately 53.4% of the population. The changes in labor force, employment, and the unemployment rate for Sutton are compared below

with the surrounding communities. Overall, Sutton has one of the lowest rates of unemployment.

1992-2002 Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment Figures

Sutton	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	783	785	791	836	820	837	836	849	825	820	824
Employed	754	758	779	825	808	823	824	837	814	808	808
% Unemployed	3.7%	3.4%	1.5%	1.3%	1.5%	1.7%	1.4%	1.4%	1.3%	1.5%	1.9%
Bradford	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	744	766	808	805	799	789	794	807	839	835	1,559
Employed	696	710	759	778	767	762	775	793	816	814	1,524
% Unemployed	6.5%	7.3%	6.2%	3.4%	4.0%	3.4%	2.4%	1.7%	2.7%	2.5%	3.2%
New London	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	1,338	1,380	1,443	1,522	1,511	1,564	1,584	1,607	1,578	1,554	1,559
Employed	1,282	1,323	1,408	1,502	1,473	1,527	1,555	1,580	1,536	1,524	1,524
% Unemployed	4.2%	4.0%	2.4%	1.3%	2.5%	2.4%	1.8%	1.7%	2.7%	1.9%	2.2%
Newbury	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	705	765	848	780	778	792	787	799	782	778	785
Employed	677	740	824	761	751	771	778	790	768	763	763
% Unemployed	4.0%	3.3%	2.8%	2.4%	3.5%	2.7%	1.1%	1.1%	1.8%	1.9%	2.8%
Warner	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	1,318	1,302	1,388	1,418	1,406	1,462	1,494	1,524	1,575	1,575	1,660
Employed	1,256	1,254	1,347	1,382	1,363	1,428	1,466	1,499	1,543	1,538	1,611
% Unemployed	4.7%	3.7%	3.0%	2.5%	3.1%	2.3%	1.9%	1.6%	2.0%	2.3%	3.2%
Wilmot	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	479	496	549	548	546	554	554	564	553	545	548
Employed	465	480	545	542	533	546	550	558	543	539	539
% Unemployed	2.9%	3.2%	0.7%	1.1%	2.4%	1.4%	0.7%	1.1%	1.8%	1.1%	1.6%
Merrimack County	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	65,731	66,259	69,934	71,381	70,573	71,744	73,423	74,038	76,669	77,072	80,712
Employed	61,560	63,027	67,622	69,393	68,445	69,920	71,684	72,471	74,895	75,019	78,185
% Unemployed	6.3%	4.9%	3.3%	2.8%	3.0%	2.5%	2.4%	2.1%	2.3%	2.7%	3.1%
State of NH	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Labor Force	610,412	615,967	623,868	634,001	623,783	645,555	652,922	668,096	685,511	688,657	705,633

Employed	564,565	575,418	595,102	608,783	597,868	625,386	633,949	649,969	666,320	664,293	672,363
% Unemployed	7.5%	6.6%	4.6%	4.0%	4.2%	3.1%	2.9%	2.7%	2.8%	3.5%	4.7%

Source: NH Department of Employment Security, 2004

Occupations

The chart below outlines what types of occupations the residents of Sutton were engaged in during 2000. The numbers below do not necessarily represent the types of occupations available in the Town of Sutton, but those occupations of Sutton residents. In 2000, the highest percentage of the Sutton work force was employed in the “Management, professional and related occupations”, while the lowest percentage of people were employed in “Farming, fishing and forestry occupations”.

Occupations of Employed Sutton Residents, 2000

	Number Employed	Percent Employed
Management, professional, and related occupations	311	36.7%
Service occupations	104	12.3%
Sales and office occupations	220	25.9%
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	9	1.1%
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	104	12.3%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	99	11.7%
Total Employer Persons over 16 years of age	847	100.0%

Sources: 2000 Census

Commuting Patterns of Residents

The table below shows that most of Sutton’s employed residents (842) work outside of Sutton, and only 34 of the jobs in Sutton were occupied by a non-resident in 2000.

Sutton Residents’ Commuting Patterns, 2000

Number of Sutton Residents In the Labor Force	842
Total Number of Jobs in Sutton	185
Number of Sutton Residents Employed in Sutton	151
Number of Sutton Residents Commuting to Another Town for Employment	691
Where Sutton Residents Commuting to for Employment (Top 3 Locations)	New London
	Concord
	Manchester

Source: 2000 Census

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS OF RESIDENTS

The income characteristics of households, families, and individuals tell a tale of the economic conditions within a community. Income and poverty levels of a community serve as indicators of the types of social services that a municipality may require.

Per Capita Income

As can be seen below, Sutton has the one of the highest percent change in per capita income from 1980 to 2000, as compared to abutting communities.

Per Capita Income, 1980-2000

Town	1980 Per Capita Income	1990 Per Capita Income	% Change 1980- 1990	1996 Per Capita Income	% Change 1990- 1996	2000 Per Capita Income	% Change 1996- 2000	% Change 1980- 2000
Sutton	\$4,796	\$17,886	272.9%	\$20,673	15.6%	\$24,432	18.2%	409.4%
Bradford	\$6,160	\$17,234	179.8%	\$19,771	14.7%	\$22,240	12.5%	261.0%
New London	\$7,044	\$27,055	144.7%	\$33,855	25.1%	\$37,556	10.9%	433.2%
Newbury	\$6,274	\$16,091	156.5%	\$23,531	46.2%	\$29,521	25.5%	370.5%
Warner	\$4,848	\$18,088	273.1%	\$23,056	27.0%	\$21,587	-6.4%	345.3%
Wilmot	\$5,740	\$15,766	174.7%	\$19,498	23.7%	\$25,629	31.4%	346.5%
Merrimack County	\$9,915	\$20,703	108.8%	\$25,733	24.3%	\$23,844	-7.3%	140.5%
State of NH	\$9,601	\$20,713	115.7%	\$26,522	28.0%	\$23,208	-12.5%	141.7%

Source: 1980 Census, 1990 Census, 2000 Census, NH Department of Revenue Administration, 2004

Median Household and Family Income

Household income is the total income of people living in one household. Family income is the total income of all family members who consider themselves members of one household.

Median income is the middle figure in a series from lowest to highest. As can be seen below, Sutton's median household and family income is average as compared to abutting communities.

Median Household Income 1980-2000

Towns	Median Household Income 1980	Median Household Income 1990	Median Household Income 2000	Median Household Income % Change 1980-1990	Median Household Income % Change 1990-2000	Median Household Income % Change 1980-2000
Sutton	\$15,753	\$35,536	\$50,924	125.6%	43.3%	223.3%
Bradford	\$14,773	\$36,667	\$49,018	148.2%	33.7%	231.8%
New London	\$20,931	\$46,681	\$61,520	123.0%	31.8%	193.9%
Newbury	\$14,605	\$35,821	\$58,026	145.3%	62.0%	297.3%
Warner	\$15,962	\$37,917	\$44,142	137.5%	16.4%	176.5%
Wilmot	\$14,792	\$37,000	\$49,605	150.1%	34.1%	235.4%
Merrimack Co.	\$35,801	\$28,012	\$48,522	- 21.8%	73.2%	35.5%
State of NH	\$28,508	\$36,329	\$49,467	27.4%	36.2%	73.5%

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census, NH Department of Employment Security, 2004

Median Family Income 1980-2000

Towns	Median Family Income 1980	Median Family Income 1990	Median Family Income 2000	Median Family Income % Change 1980-1990	Median Family Income % Change 1990-2000	Median Family Income % Change 1980-2000
Sutton	\$16,937	\$40,990	\$56,685	142.0%	38.3%	234.7%
Bradford	\$16,767	\$41,106	\$57,083	145.2%	38.9%	240.4%
New London	\$27,800	\$55,869	\$82,201	101.0%	47.1%	195.7%
Newbury	\$16,542	\$40,303	\$61,389	143.6%	52.3%	271.1%
Warner	\$17,261	\$43,317	\$50,926	150.9%	17.6%	195.0%
Wilmot	\$16,150	\$43,020	\$57,143	166.4%	32.8%	253.8%
Merrimack Co.	\$32,500	\$41,018	\$56,842	26.2%	38.6%	74.9%
State of NH	\$33,049	\$41,628	\$57,575	26.0%	38.3%	74.2%

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census, NH Department of Employment Security, 2004

Poverty

The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to define poverty levels. If a family's total income is less than the Census Bureau's threshold, then that family, and every individual in it is considered below poverty level. The poverty thresholds are updated annually for inflation using the Consumer Price Index. The following table contains the poverty thresholds for 1990 and 2000 that the Census Bureau used for their calculations.

Poverty Thresholds, 1990-2000

1990		2000	
Individual Person	\$6,652	Individual Person	\$8,794
2-Person Family	\$8,509	2-Person Family	\$11,239
3-Person Family	\$10,419	3-Person Family	\$13,738
4-Person Family	\$13,359	4-Person Family	\$17,603
5-Person Family	\$15,792	5-Person Family	\$20,819
6-Person Family	\$17,839	6-Person Family	\$23,528
7-Person Family	\$20,241	7-Person Family	\$26,701
8-Person Family	\$22,582	8-Person Family	\$29,701
9+ Person	\$26,848	9+ Person	\$35,060

Family		Family	
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Source: US Census Bureau, 2004

By looking at the table below, you can see that Sutton had, in 2000, an average rate of families and individual persons below the Poverty level. Sutton's share of persons and families below the Poverty level is below the state and county levels respectively.

Poverty Data for Sutton and Abutting Communities, 1990-2000

Town	% of Families Below Poverty Level 1990	% of Families Below Poverty Level 2000	% of Persons Below Poverty Level 1990	% of Persons Below Poverty Level 2000
Sutton	1.9%	2.5%	4.6%	4.9%
Bradford	4.2%	2.5%	6.2%	4.1%
New London	NA	1.5%	1.2%	2.4%
Newbury	NA	0.0%	3.6%	1.8%
Warner	3.9%	5.0%	5.6%	6.8%
Wilmot	5.8%	1.8%	8.4%	4.4%
Merrimack Co.	NA	4.1%	5.5%	5.9%
State of NH	NA	4.3%	6.4%	6.5%

Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census

SUTTON EMPLOYERS

Understanding historic trends in the local economic base can help the community better develop sound economic development strategies for the future. One key trend is the change in size and type of the local employment base. Local employment data (i.e. the number and types of jobs in community) is collected by various government agencies, including the Census Bureau and the New Hampshire Office of Employment Security. Using a classification system, the number of employment positions for each business in the community can be identified and tracked over time. The School District is the largest employer in Sutton.

Wage Comparisons

To gain a better understanding of the types and quality of the jobs located in Sutton we can compare wages paid by employers in Sutton to those in the surrounding communities. Although the figures below show average annual weekly wages for people who work within the Town of Sutton, they do not represent the average weekly wage of a Sutton resident.

As can be seen below, Sutton is the highest for private industry weekly wages, as compared to abutting communities. See the table below for more detail.

Average Annual Weekly Wage - Private Industries and Government, 2002

	Sutton	Bradford	New London	Newbury	Warner	Wilmot
Private Industries						
# Employers	32	38	217	42	63	33
# Employees	197	212	2,382	425	792	140
Avg. Weekly Wage	\$787	\$607	\$563	\$301	\$452	\$452
Government						
# Employers	6	5	8	3	7	1
# Employees	155	90	247	32	118	15
Avg. Weekly Wage	\$502	\$480	\$498	\$563	\$482	\$292

Source: NH Department of Employment Security, 2002

Tax Characteristics

An examination of the tax rate helps to gauge the economic attractiveness of a community to businesses. As can be seen below, Sutton's total tax rates have fluctuated since 1997, with Sutton having the lowest total tax rate of abutting communities, with the exception of New London.

Breakdown of Sutton Tax Rates, 1997-2002

Year	Municipal Tax	Local Education	State Education	County Tax	Total Tax
1997	\$5.62	\$17.22	--	\$2.10	\$24.94
1998	\$6.25	\$17.06	--	\$2.06	\$25.37
1999	\$6.46	\$6.47	\$6.10	\$1.95	\$20.98
2000	\$6.60	\$6.51	\$5.93	\$1.94	\$20.98
2001	\$7.18	\$6.69	\$5.66	\$2.45	\$21.98
2002	\$7.71	\$8.88	\$5.80	\$2.63	\$25.02
2003	\$5.47	\$6.81	\$3.53	\$1.70	\$17.51

Source: NH Division of Revenue Administration, 2002

Tax Rates of Sutton and Abutting Communities, 2003

Town	Total Tax Rate
Sutton	\$17.51
Bradford	\$22.71
New London	\$15.47
Newbury	\$21.17
Warner	\$33.29

Wilmot	\$23.21
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Source: NH Department of Revenue Administration, 2004

CHAPTER SUMMARY

As previously stated, the purpose of this chapter is to define the properties that constitute the economic makeup of the Town of Sutton. The community survey taken during the summer of 1999 indicated that the majority of residents wished to retain the rural character of the town, which in turn should help us retain our high quality of life.

Based on the numerous charts included in this chapter, Sutton falls towards the middle of just about every category, including population growth, education of the populace, income (both individual and family income), and tax rates, when compared with the surrounding towns.

Sutton's population has fluctuated over the years, but the general trend has been steady, slow growth, and we can expect this trend to continue. The largest growth spurt in recent years came between 1970 and 1980, where had almost a 70% increase in residents, and judging by recent growth in other central New Hampshire towns, we can probably expect growth of that magnitude during the next few years. National population forecasts indicate a US population of approximately 450 million people by the year 2050, up from the present 300 million, and of course, New Hampshire and Sutton will see it's share of that increase.